

# BROWN COUNTY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

## DECEMBER 2025



**Mission:** We are dedicated to promoting sustainable, responsible and healthy beekeeping practices in Northeastern Wisconsin for both experienced and first time beekeepers. We strive to create a fun environment where learning opportunities exist for association members and the public.

[www.browncountybeekeepers.com](http://www.browncountybeekeepers.com)



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let me start off by wishing everyone Happy Holidays! Hopefully you get to spend some quality time with your loved ones.

Beekeepers either use the end of the calendar year or the Winter Solstice (Dec 21st) to end the bee's year. So, the work now is just to monitor and maintain your bees. I wrapped a couple of hives this weekend and had an interesting observation on the hive with the Broodminder. I could hear the hive start to hum while working on it. Checking the temp of the hive before the disturbance, it was 67 degrees in the lower brood box. The bee's activity shot the temperature up to 88 degrees in two hours, with an outside temperature of 23 degrees. That is some heat generation.

Don't forget about your hives during the winter - they still need some attention. Monitoring the weight of the hives, is a good practice for your winter inspections, to make sure they don't starve out. Also, with the snow fall we are having this year, make sure you are keeping your entrances clear.

Most important activity at the end of the year is some reflection on your beekeeping, while it is still fresh in your mind. What went right for you? What do you want to improve upon? What new skill or challenge to you want to accomplish next year.

Answer those questions and you can start researching for next years beekeeping season while you have some extra time.

- That's what this month's buzz is about



Chris Groth - President  
[president@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:president@browncountybeekeepers.com)

# 2025 BCBA MEMBER AWARDS

## 2025 BCBA

### ***Beekeeper of the Year !***

This year we honor Dave Elsen as someone who represents the very best of what beekeeping can be — passion, dedication, humility, and a willingness to keep learning no matter how many seasons you've been in the bee yard.

Dave Elsen embodies all of it.

He shows up and gives back. He supports new beekeepers. He stands shoulder-to-shoulder with anyone who needs a hand. And he continually pushes himself to become a better steward of the bees.

This award isn't just about the honey you harvest or the number of colonies you manage — it's about who you are as a beekeeper and as a community member. Dave leads quietly, teaches naturally, and inspires effortlessly.

🔥 **Let this be a spark for the rest of us.**

Every one of us has the ability to grow, learn, and rise. Whether you're in your first year or your fifteenth, the bee yard rewards those who stay curious, stay humble, and stay engaged.

Thank you, Dave, for raising the bar — and showing us what it looks like to lead with heart.

**Here's to a strong 2026 season ahead. Let's rise together.** 🐝❤️



## 2025 BCBA

### ***New Beeks of the Year!***

We proudly recognized **Lucas and Liam Ford** as our 2025 New Beeks of the Year, and we couldn't be more excited for these two outstanding young men.

From their very first season, Lucas and Liam have shown the kind of curiosity, work ethic, and patience that every beekeeper needs — and they've done it with maturity far beyond their years. Their willingness to learn, ask questions, share updates, and participate in club activities has made them stand out in the best possible way.

What makes their achievement even more meaningful is the example they're setting for the next generation of youth beekeepers. They prove that beekeeping isn't just a hobby for adults — it's a place where young people can thrive, grow, and lead.

A very special thank you goes out to their mentors, Dave Elsen and Club President Chris Groth, whose guidance, encouragement, and hands-on support have played a huge role in shaping these young beekeepers. Strong youth starts with strong mentors — and our club is lucky to have both.

**We're proud of you both — keep inspiring, keep learning, and keep leading the way.**



# 2025 HONEY SHOW AWARDS



## 2025 Honey Show: Celebrating Craft, Skill, and Standout Wisconsin Honey

The Brown County Beekeepers Association closed out another year of craftsmanship and friendly competition with our annual Honey Show—an event that highlights the talent, dedication, and creativity of beekeepers across Northeast Wisconsin. From pristine wax blocks to rich fall honeys and stunning artisan entries, this year's submissions showed just how far our members push the craft. Below are the results from each division:



### ***Wax Block***

1st — Dick Sturm  
2nd — Rance Bennett  
3rd — Shellie Milheiser



### ***Wax Candle***

1st — Shellie Milheiser  
2nd — Jim & Nancy Sharp



1st — Jeff Schroeder  
\*Rance Bennett Standing in  
2nd — Carol Sturm  
3rd — Liam Ford



1st — Carol Sturm  
2nd — Shellie Milheiser  
3rd — Jim & Nancy Sharp



1st — Melissa Mayer-Ford  
2nd — Dave Elsen  
3rd — Dick Sturm



# 2025 HONEY SHOW AWARDS



## LIGHT HONEY DIVISION



1st — Shellie Milheiser  
2nd — Dick Sturm  
3rd — Rance Bennett



## AMBER HONEY DIVISION



1st — Dick Sturm  
2nd — Dave Elsen  
3rd — Jeff Schroeder  
\*Rance Bennett Standing in



## DARK HONEY DIVISION



1st — Rebecca Marquardt  
2nd — Dave Elsen  
3rd — Bob Michiels



## BLACK JAR HONEY DIVISION



1st — Dick Sturm  
2nd — Let It Bee  
3rd — Jeff Schroeder  
\*Rance Bennett Standing in






# Introduction to Beekeeping Class

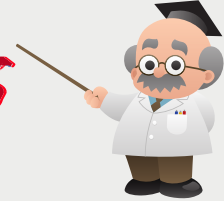


## Calling All Volunteers – Help Us Welcome the Next Generation of Beekeepers! Hello Beekeepers!

It's that time of year again — our annual Introduction to Beekeeping Class is just around the corner, and we need your help to make it a success!

 **Date:** Saturday, January 17, 2026  
 **Location:** NWTC Energy Center  
 **Time:** 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



This cornerstone event introduces new beekeepers to the fundamentals of hive setup, management, and bee health — and it's powered entirely by our club's volunteers. The class has helped hundreds of new beekeepers take their first confident steps, and this year, we're aiming to make it our best yet.

We're currently finalizing the agenda and instructor lineup, and we still need a few more passionate volunteers to step up and help teach, assist, or support setup and registration.

### Here's where we especially need help:

- Registration (7:30–8:00 AM)
- Welcome / Club Overview
- Hive Location & Setup
- Live Equipment Demos
- Hive Inspections & Installations

If you're interested in helping — even for part of the day — your experience and enthusiasm will make a real difference for new beekeepers.

Let's show new beekeepers what our club is all about — education, collaboration, and community.

### To volunteer or ask questions, please contact:

**Bob Michiels**

920-660-3577

[rjmichiels53@gmail.com](mailto:rjmichiels53@gmail.com)



# December Beekeeping Tips – Northeast Wisconsin



## ***Cold weather, warm clusters, smart checks.***

Your bees are clustered tight and conserving energy. December is all about watching from the outside and avoiding anything that forces them to break their winter rhythm.

### • **Don't open hives**

Cracking a lid dumps heat and moisture. Only open a colony if you truly suspect a dead-out.

### • **Check for survival without disturbing them**

Use simple, non-invasive signs:

- A gentle tap and soft hum
- Melt patterns in the snow
- Cleansing flights on rare warm days

### • **Use the Club's FLIR Camera**

The BCBA infrared camera lets you confirm cluster location and heat loss without opening the hive.

Rental link: <https://browncountybeekeepers.com/members/equipment/>

### • **Keep entrances clear**

A quick swipe after snowfall maintains airflow and prevents moisture buildup.

### • **Watch for moisture, not cold**

Cold doesn't kill colonies — wet + hungry does. Look for condensation on covers or damp landing boards. Improve insulation if needed.

### • **Emergency feed only if truly light**

Slip in dry sugar or a winter patty on a stable above-freezing day. Quick open, quick close.

### • **Secure your equipment**

Wind and storms shift lids, wraps, and insulation. Tighten everything before the deep freeze.

## **Photo Credit: A-Frame Acres**

See what Big Wayne is up to...Click the link below



## **FACEBOOK SITES MANAGED BY BCBA**

**Northeast WI Beekeepers**  
beekeepers helping beekeepers

**Brown County Beekeepers**  
updates on club happenings

# RECIPES FROM THE HIVE



## Holiday Honey Gingerbread Cookies A Sweet December Treat

### Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup butter, softened
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  cup brown sugar
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  cup local honey
  - 1 egg
  - 3 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt
- Ginger  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp • Cinnamon 1 tsp • Nutmeg  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp • Cloves  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp

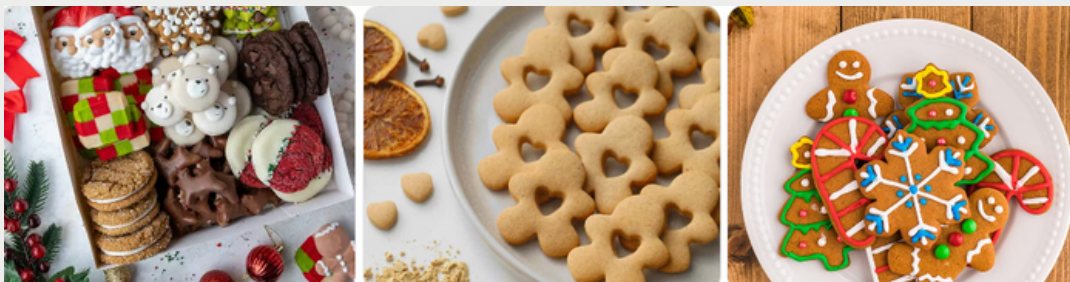


### Directions

- Cream butter, brown sugar & honey. Add egg.
- Mix dry ingredients separately; combine into dough.
- Chill 2 hours.
- Roll to  $\frac{1}{4}$ ", cut shapes, bake at 350°F for 8–10 min.
- Cool & decorate.

### Beekeeper's Tip:

**Goldenrod-heavy honey gives a warm butterscotch note that makes these cookies pop.**



### Have a Favorite Recipe with Honey?

We'd love to feature it in an upcoming newsletter! Whether it's sweet, savory, or straight from your kitchen experiments, share your favorite honey-inspired recipe with us.

✉ Send your submissions (and a photo if you have one!) to [secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com)

Let's keep our Hive Recipes buzzing with fresh ideas from our members!



# 2025 BCBA Meeting Education Calendar

Reg = Regular Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:30p

MBM = Meeting Before the Meeting: Same Wednesday, starts at 5:45p

Date	Education	Type	Presenter
January 15, 2025	Varroa Mite Management	Reg	Dick Sturm
February 19, 2025	Identifying and Managing Honey Bee Diseases Minnesota Bee Squad	Reg	Jessica Helgen Bee Squad Pgm Director or Jenny Warner Bee Squad Beekeeper
March 19, 2025	Spring Management Beekeeping antibiotics	Reg Reg	Keith Abel, Zaidel Wild Apiary Helen Bennett, This Old Hive
April 15, 2025	Spring Management Beekeeping antibiotics	Reg MBM	David Elsen Wayne Steigelman Nathan Frailey
May 21, 2025	Girl Next-Door Honey	Reg	Hillary Kearney
June 18, 2025	Beekeeping antibiotics	Reg	Justine Nguyen PhD Candidate - USDA SARE Grant Fellow
August 20, 2025	Fall Management Honey Extraction	Reg MBM	Panel Wayne Steigelman Nathan Frailey
September 17, 2025	Special Guest	Reg	Eugene Makovek
October 15, 2025	Discussion Panel	Reg	Wayne Steigelman Facilitates
November 19, 2025	Products of the Hive and Honey Judging Contest	Reg	Stephanie Slater and Club

**2026 CALENDAR**  
**IS SHAPING UP!**



# Brown County Beekeeping Association

## Member Benefits

### **Club Sponsor – Hansen Honey Farm, Rhinelander, WI**

- 5% discount for all BCBA members for ongoing purchase
- For online discount code, contact [secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com)
- When purchasing in-store only, let them know you are a member of the BCBA.

### **Club Sponsor – Let It Bee, Inc., Greenville, WI**

- 5% discount for all BCBA member purchases, except nucs. In-store only.
- When purchasing in-store only, let them know you are a member of the BCBA.

**[Click here for the Club Sponsor Website Page](#)**

### **Club Equipment Rental**

Perks of being a member! [Click here for the full rental list.](#)

### **American Bee Journal Subscriptions**

(Contact Club Treasurer for Discount form)

### **Club Education Reimbursement Opportunity**

Club members are eligible for up to \$25/ calendar year for continuing education

*Eligibility Guidelines:*

- Must be a current member for at least 12 consecutive months.
- Member must submit their request to the Leadership Team prior to the event including details on how it aligns to the Club's Mission.
- Note: BCBA sponsored events, books or magazines not eligible for reimbursements.
- Club Expectations of Members Receiving Education Reimbursement
- Overview of the education to the club or an education session.
- Write-up with photos and/or video for club publication.

## 2025 Club Officers

### **President: Chris Groth**

[president@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:president@browncountybeekeepers.com)

### **Vice President: Nathan C. Frailey, Sr.**

[vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:vicepresident@browncountybeekeepers.com)

### **Website Chair: Carl Fisher**

[info@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:info@browncountybeekeepers.com)

### **Social Media: Wayne Steigelman**

### **Club Education CoChairs: Mimi Gerner and Dave Elsen**

### **Treasurer: Chad Ford**

[treasurer@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:treasurer@browncountybeekeepers.com)

### **Secretary: Edmund Poillion**

[secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com](mailto:secretary@browncountybeekeepers.com)

### **Education Outreach Chair: Julie Mazzoleni and Bob Michiels**

### **Board Member at Large: Dick Sturm**